

Society of Friends in the
United States: their views
of the Anti-Slavery question,
and the treatment of the
people of colour

E
449
S6
1840
c. 1
ROBA



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

[NOT PUBLISHED.]



3 1761 04238 9395

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

IN THE

UNITED STATES:

THEIR VIEWS OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY QUESTION, AND TREATMENT
OF THE PEOPLE OF COLOUR.

COMPILED FROM ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

209389
22.2.21

DARLINGTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON, MARKET-PLACE.

1840.

E
449
S6
1840
c. 1
ROBA

STATE OF

RECEIVED ON THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF MAY
MDCCLXV BY ROBERT MCINTOSH
FOR THE USE OF THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARIES

ROTONDO

A FORTY-EIGHT VOLUME SET IN DAFFIN'S

1811

INTRODUCTION.

THE documents contained in the subsequent pages, owe their present degree of publicity, to a solemn and overpowering conviction upon the mind of the individual into whose possession they came, that the interests of truth, and the cause of humanity require, that facts so startling, and, if true, so deeply affecting the character of Friends in America, should be made known to the Members of the Society on this side of the Atlantic ; more especially, as great stress is also laid upon the hurtful tendency of the course of late years pursued by ministers from England,* visiting the United States, and the salutary influence of remonstrances sent from this country.

The information now given, and much more of a corroborative character, has been forwarded to England, in consequence of a wish having been expressed by individuals, to ascertain, if possible, what amount of credit was due to a variety of painful reports, respecting the conduct of American Friends upon the Anti-Slavery question, and their treatment of the People of Colour.

The individual in this country, who is responsible for the appearance of the following pages, is conscious of no desire to bring unfounded charges against Friends in the United States : or, to make known, unnecessarily, existing defects and inconsistencies ; or, to call in question the faithfulness and integrity of those who have paid religious visits to America ; or, to witness a relaxation of the strict and wholesome discipline of the Society ; or, a compromise of any of the distinguishing doctrines and peculiarities of Friends. On the contrary, the object sought, in putting Friends in possession of the annexed statement of facts and opinions, is

* In the original documents, there are many references to the course which particular individuals have felt it their duty to adopt, during their ministerial visits to America. These, for obvious reasons, have been omitted.

such a revival of their ancient and holy zeal in the cause of pure religion and practical piety, as shall wipe away the reproach, now cast upon a large portion of the Society, and shall render the Body, on both sides of the water, as conspicuous for self-denial, and the acting out of its great principles, as it was in the days when it renounced all participation in the oppressive systems of the nominally Christian world.

The grave and momentous character of the subjects now brought under notice, will, it is believed, be universally admitted; whatever difference of opinion may exist, as to the value of the evidence brought forward to sustain certain allegations. The object of this pamphlet will be gained, if it leads to an impartial and complete examination of the whole matter, and to such expostulation and reproof, subsequently, as may seem to be demanded, by the circumstances of any who have failed in their duty, or have lost the spirit of HIM who was no respecter of persons, and who came to "preach deliverance to the captive."

NOTE.—Friends, into whose hands the following documents may fall, are requested to lend them to those to whom, through inability, they may not have been sent. Copies may be obtained, gratis, on application to EDMUND FRY & SON, 4, Bishopsgate Street, London, to whom, also, reference may be made, by any who desire to inspect the Manuscripts, from which the Pamphlet has been compiled.

LETTER

FROM

WILLIAM BASSETT,

LYNN, MASS., U. S.

Lynn, Mass. U. S., 8 mo. 3, 1839.

DEAR FRIEND,

A FEW months since our mutual friend, * * *, showed me a letter from thee, in which thou asks for information in relation to the position which the Society of Friends in this country hold, with reference to the question of the Abolition of Slavery, and the course which it takes, respecting its own members, who are engaged in the Anti-slavery cause. * * * requested me to furnish thee with such information on these subjects as might be within my knowledge. I do not feel at liberty to decline doing so, for it has long seemed desirable to me, that our friends in England, should be informed of the existing state of things here, that they might exercise such influence as they may have with their brethren and sisters on this side the Atlantic, to produce a feeling among us more congenial to the spirit of true Christianity! I have heard the same desire expressed by others, and I trust it has not arisen from a disposition to lessen our society, or any of its members, in the esteem of our Trans-atlantic friends; but, from a sincere wish that, your strength might be put forth, to aid in removing the dishonour which we have suffered to settle upon the fair inheritance which has descended to us from our worthy predecessors in religious profession.

It is not without a struggle with a naturally ease-seeking disposition, that I have brought my mind to speak plainly of such things as I conceive to be wrong in the Society of which I am a member, and which, in days that are past, I have fondly hoped would shine forth with increased brightness, as a beacon to the world; but, I have felt

myself impelled by my love for its best interests, and still more by an apprehension of duty to the cause of truth, to interpose my feeble influence against the current which threatens to overwhelm our Society, and make it "a hissing and a bye-word" among the people.

It is difficult to convey to one, situated at so great a distance, such information as is necessary, in order to judge correctly of the true state of things. There are many little incidents continually occurring, each apparently unimportant in itself, which, in the aggregate, would go far, and properly too, to influence the judgment; but which, in the nature of things, cannot be communicated in this manner.

The Society of Friends in this country, as such, has done little or nothing towards agitating, enlightening, and purifying the public mind on the subject of Slavery. I never heard the subject alluded to, with this view, in any of our meetings, nor have I ever heard of any such discussion in any meeting of the Society, until it has been sometimes introduced, recently, by professed abolitionists, with how much effect the sequel may shew. We formerly in New England Yearly Meeting, had a query on the subject, something like this,— "Do Friends faithfully maintain their testimony against Slavery?" This was expunged some years since, and an advice substituted, to be read once a year in our preparative and monthly meetings, "that Friends maintain their testimony faithfully against Slavery." On these occasions, I have never known any expression to be elicited. The subject may have been incidentally alluded to in some of our public documents, but, if so, it has been passed over so slightly, as not to produce any impression, and, indeed, I am not aware that such has been the case. I believe, one or more of our Meetings for Sufferings did memorialize Congress several years since against the admission of Missouri into the Union, as a Slave State. And the Meeting for Sufferings of Virginia Yearly Meeting, in 1832, petitioned the Legislature of that State for some measures to be taken for the *gradual* abolition of Slavery, and for the *removal* of the emancipated from the State or Country! Besides these, I know of no public action in reference to the subject, with the exception of several addresses which have been issued by some of our Yearly Meetings, since the commencement of, and occasioned, as I believe, by the *external pressure* of the Anti-slavery Reform; and, in most or all of these, Friends have been especially careful to caution our members against moving in this matter, *except as the body should see fit*. In these remarks, I

would also except the action of a very small number of Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, in which abolitionists have had a sufficient influence to procure it. This has been the case, I believe, in one or more instances in the western part of New York Yearly Meeting, and in our own (Salem) Quarterly Meeting, to which I shall have occasion to refer. I think, I am not unjust or uncharitable in saying, that a general torpor and indifference, in relation to this vastly important subject, has prevailed among us; and we have been satisfied with the Society having prohibited its own members from holding slaves, (for which no credit is due to the present generation,) considering that, by that act, we had borne our "testimony faithfully against slavery." I may here mention, however, that the General Epistle of London Yearly Meeting, I think of 1829, which advised Friends "individually to co-operate with others," in the Anti-slavery cause, Temperance reform, and for other benevolent purposes, was printed and distributed by our Meeting for Sufferings, without comment, as has been usual. But it should be remembered, that this was previous to the commencement of the present Anti-slavery reform, and before the subject had begun to awaken public sentiment. Moreover, at that time, many Friends were connected with popular benevolent associations, even some of those who now most loudly and harshly denounce their fellow-members for acting in the same capacity. What has brought over them such a change? perhaps the information which will be laid before thee, may enable thee to judge. I may say, in passing, that until we were disturbed by the "*excitement*" of abolition, the propriety of Friends so associating, was scarcely questioned, and did not in any degree, interrupt the harmony of the Society. Those who doubted the expediency of such a course, governed themselves accordingly, leaving others in the free exercise of their consciences, and no jarring, no contention, was known among us.

For several years after the commencement of this great reform, it did not seem to claim much of the attention of Friends, as a body, the number of our members who were connected with it, being but small, and *not being among the most influential in the Society*; but, as the spirit of abolitionism more pervaded the Society, and the infection seemed to be extending upwards towards the higher class, the opposition to its influence increased. The opposition began to manifest itself in some of the leading members of this Yearly Meet-

ing, chiefly of a prominent Quarterly Meeting, at the time when our dear friend, J. Backhouse, was in this country, and I am satisfied that he was not a little exercised on account of it. The opposition was not merely against our *action*, but against our *principles*, as I think he will recollect, if he should be reminded of a discussion which he and Charles Stuart held with some of our friends at Newport, at the time of our Yearly Meeting. Here, I think, is still the ground-work of the difficulty to a very great extent. I believe Friends are not prepared to come up to the high ground of *Immediate, Unconditional Emancipation*. There is too much of that anti-christian prejudice among us, to admit our acknowledging "every man as our *brother*." I heard J. Backhouse say to a Friend, speaking of the Abolitionists, "See, that you do not lay a *finger* in the way of these men." * * * * * But to return.

The position which I have held, has rendered me peculiarly obnoxious, and has made me, more, perhaps, than any other member of the Society in this country, the object of opposition; hence, I shall be under the necessity of speaking of myself, even at the risk of being considered *egotistical*. Although agreeing in the principles of Immediate Emancipation, and, from the first, sympathising with Garrison, the pioneer in the cause, yet, until within three years, I had withheld active participation, having been placed within the reach of adverse influences which I had suffered to control me. I was a Member of our Meeting for Sufferings, and of our Yearly Meeting Boarding School committee, besides holding various appointments in my own Quarterly and Monthly Meetings. Thus situated, I was brought much into contact with those who were most opposed to the Abolition movement, and under an influence not the most favourable for independent freedom of thought and action, and for imbibing a predominant feeling of *individual responsibility*. About three years since, I was led to reflect more on the importance of *action*, and felt as if I could not be much longer excused from it; still, however, looking to the Society as the medium through which our efforts must be made. In the winter of 1836-7, several of the able advocates of the cause, visited our town, and I was induced to attend some of the meetings, and the irresistible appeals which I then heard, had the effect to enlist my feelings and sympathies more strongly in the great enterprise, and after serious reflection and deep exercise of mind, I came to the conclusion that

I could no longer stand aloof, but that I had *individual duties* to perform, from which my connexion with the Society of Friends could not absolve me. I had previously, as an Overseer of our Monthly Meeting, united in a decision refusing the use of our meeting house for lectures on the subject, by W. L. Garrison and H. B. Stanton. I now became uneasy with the stand we had taken, and communicated my feelings to the other Overseers, whereupon, we again met and reversed our decision, and granted the use of the house for that purpose. Strong feelings of disapprobation were now manifest from a very few members of our meeting, among them a Minister, whose influence, has, perhaps, more than all others, contributed to array against us the opposition with which we are contending. On conversing with him about this time, he made an expression like this,—“There is so much corruption amongst the Abolitionists, that the few conscientious men among them, cannot save them from destruction;” and spoke in a very contemptuous manner of calling on one, “not a member of our Society, to teach *Friends* their duty,” &c. Said that it was like employing a Clergyman to preach for us, instead of our own ministers, &c. I introduce such examples with no invidious design, but that thou may better judge of the character of the opposition.

At our Yearly Meeting in 1837, a proposition was received from Salem Quarterly Meeting, that the Yearly Meeting memorialise Congress for the Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia. Without any discussion, the subject was referred to the Meeting for Sufferings. It was entered, in course, on their minutes, and was called up at each meeting of that body for the ensuing year, and a minute made that, “*no way opened to act.*” At this same Yearly Meeting, the situation of the Indians of this country was introduced into the meeting, which at once excited apparently a lively interest, and elicited an animated debate, which resulted in the prompt appointment of a committee. I could not help remarking the striking contrast between an *Indian* philanthropy and a *Negro* philanthropy, and asking myself, why this difference? Is it possible that it is because one is a *popular benevolence*, and the other is denounced by the great and worldly-wise, as a dream of visionary enthusiasm? Whenever the cause of the suffering *red man* has been brought before us, we have never heard it put by, because “*no way opened*” to administer to his relief! I had previously heard, in the Meeting

for Sufferings, the discussion of the Slavery question in the Yearly Meeting deprecated as a thing necessary to be guarded against; and the course now taken, was in strict keeping with such a recommendation.

At the same time, the Meeting for Sufferings presented an address on Slavery, rehearsing what our Society had done—how it had rid itself of the evil; and how it had constantly and consistently borne its testimony to the present time, and calling on other denominations to follow our example, while no allusion was made to the efforts making by others; which was directed to be printed and circulated. After being once read, a minister who had been somewhat active in the Anti-Slavery cause, requested that it might have a second reading, which is very common with important documents, and which I never before knew refused. He was immediately replied to by another minister, an influential member of the Meeting for Sufferings, who observed, that, if the Friend's object was, to produce any discussion, he should *object*, for it had generally been the case that, when documents prepared by the Meeting for Sufferings, had been altered by the Yearly Meeting, they had generally been made worse! This course was adopted, *and the second reading refused!* At the same meeting, the subject of opening our Meeting-houses for Anti-Slavery lectures &c., was brought before the meeting, which after a rapid expression in favor, resulted in issuing an advice *against* opening them in future for lectures, for those—"who differ from us in sentiment on some subjects that we consider of primary importance." This was introduced by a minister from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in relation to which, a friend and minister of our Yearly Meeting said, after meeting, "well, we can afford to pay * * * well for this half-day's work." Under this advice, the doors of our Meeting-houses are barred against the advocates of God's suffering poor; and even our own Members have been refused the use of our House at Lynn, for a meeting on this interesting subject. The ground taken is, that although such a meeting is not *literally* prohibited, yet that it was the *intention* to exclude all meetings for that purpose! At this Yearly Meeting, I was on the Committee on Correspondence, and the occurrences which there came under my notice, confirmed me in the opinion I had already formed, of a want of correct *feeling* among Friends on this subject. To me was committed an Epistle from Virginia Yearly Meeting, to

prepare an essay in reply. I produced such an one as I thought proper, at a subsequent sitting of the Committee, in which their attention was called to their Slave population, and they exhorted not to be prevented by the fear of man, from faithfully advocating their cause ; introducing an appropriate quotation from the writings of John Woolman. The criticism which this essay underwent, was an index of the state of feeling which prevails too much among those who are most prominent in our Yearly Meeting. The terms, "*brethren*" and "*fellow-countrymen*," as applied to the Slaves, were objected to, because, it was said that, "we must be careful what language we use, for this may not be confined among Friends, but may get out at the South!" These objections were sustained, and other words substituted, and a large proportion of the essay stricken out.

Those who opposed our proceedings, evidently derived strength and encouragement from this Yearly Meeting. Prominent friends, talked of the consequences of our persisting in our course in the Anti-Slavery cause : it was said that, probably, the next Yearly Meeting would go further, and Friends would be prohibited from joining such associations ; and, that if we did not change our course, we should be disowned from Society. Soon after this, I received a letter from a member of a neighbouring Yearly Meeting, protesting against Friends joining Anti-Slavery Societies, with sundry reasons. Similar objections having been so often reiterated, it was thought advisable by some of my friends, that my reply should be made public, to which I did not feel at liberty to object. Accordingly, in the Autumn of that year, it was issued from the press. As a literary performance, I am sensible it is of a very low order, and I have much regretted that the task had not fallen to the lot of some one, better qualified to present the arguments, in a clear, logical, and forcible manner : but I still insist on our *right* to avail ourselves of such means, to make our sentiments known ; indeed, I think we should be criminally negligent, did we omit to improve such opportunities as present, to endeavour to stay the tide which is so strongly setting in, against what we believe to be Christian efforts, for the removal of such an enormity as American Slavery. I have since thought more accurately on the subject, and were I now to be called to a similar service, I might, perhaps, avoid some of the imperfections of that work.

That publication has brought upon me much censure. Soon

after its appearance, I received a letter from a beloved friend, in high standing in the Society, expressing his disapprobation, because, he says, it encourages—"a violation of the fundamental principles of our Society." I answered his letter; and referred to the example of Friends, who had for years been connected with similar associations; and to the practice of Friends in England, to whose proceedings this objection would apply with equal force; and asked him whether *they* did not understand our fundamental principles; to which, he did not deign to reply. A new construction is put upon our Discipline, by some, to meet the exigencies of the present time, which would prohibit us from writing for publication, on any moral subject, on which the Society professes to have a Testimony, without laying it before the Meeting for Sufferings. In the Second month, 1838, at a Meeting for Sufferings which I attended, one of the members stated, that a publication had recently appeared, written by a member of that body, which, he thought, required attention. It was concluded, after some expression in favour of the course, to appoint a Committee; but *no minute was made* in relation to it. I understand that, they reported at a subsequent meeting, that some care was necessary; and that, consequently, they were continued; but no minute was made at this time. I heard nothing official from the Committee until the Third month last, when I received a letter from one of their number, requesting me to meet them, at a distance of fifty miles from my residence. I declined the interview, for several reasons:—1st. That the whole proceeding was informal, no regular appointment having been made, and no specific charge having been presented. 2nd. That it was extra-judicial, they having no authority to deal with me, provided I had transgressed any order of Society; my own Monthly Meeting being the only authority empowered to take disciplinary action in the case: and, 3rd. That I had not violated any rule of our discipline, and therefore ought to be exempt from the odium implied in their unofficial and informal proceedings. At our late Yearly Meeting, on reading the minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings, it appeared that the Committee aforesaid made a report, which was approved by the meeting, in which I am informed that the letter is condemned, in that it maintains that our Society is not, strictly speaking, an Abolition Society; and, in that it alleges that prejudice against colour exists among Friends in this country; both of which points, I think, can

be made sufficiently clear to satisfy any candid mind. In relation to prejudice, I have abundant evidence, some of which I propose to advert to hereafter. I know not how to reply, understandingly, to this report, as I was not at the Yearly Meeting, and I presume a copy of it cannot be obtained.* I may not fully understand the purport of it, but, if I am not misinformed, it is equivalent to a charge of *falsehood*, which I am not permitted to meet, as I understand no further action is contemplated. When I entered the Anti-Slavery cause, I counted upon the loss of my *reputation* in our Society, and I have not been disappointed. At the Yearly Meeting of 1838, my name was dropped from the Meeting for Sufferings, and there have since been many unequivocal indications of such a consequence. Indeed, how can it be otherwise, when the mere act of becoming a member of an Anti-Slavery Society, or of attending an Anti-Slavery Meeting, is considered disorderly, by many of our most influential members? I have not hesitated to remonstrate with Friends for their inconsistency, and to bear my testimony against such measures as I have conceived to be wrong; feeling that I could remain in the Society, only on condition that I discharge my duty towards it in such a manner; and, in so doing, I have, in some instances, made the Anti-Slavery papers the medium of communications. For thus—"exposing the *weaknesses* of the Society," as it is called, I have been repeatedly reprimanded; and it has been more than hinted, that a loss of my membership must be the consequence, if I persist. And yet, my dear friend, how can one keep silence, when corruption threatens to overwhelm even the fairest portion of the visible church? If we should hold our peace, would not the very stones cry out? To lose one's influence in the Society, it is not necessary to become a member of an Anti-Slavery Society, or to attend lectures, but it is sufficient, openly to defend the course of those who do. I speak now of our own vicinity, where, I think, the prejudice is quite as strong as in any part of the country. At our last Yearly Meeting, so many Abolitionists were left off of appointments which they had held for years, that there cannot be a doubt of the design.

* In a letter subsequently received, W. B. says,—“In my former letter to thee, I informed thee of the proceedings of the Meeting for Sufferings in relation to my printed “Letter,” &c. I have since applied to that body for a copy of the Report made by the committee on that subject, that I might be enabled to meet the charges there made; but, as I expected; they have declined granting what seems to me so reasonable a request.”

The active and determined opposition to Abolitionists was, for a time, confined pretty much to a small number of Friends ; but those, were of a class who had long been accustomed to have their opinions received with a deference, which is not awarded to ordinary members. Owing, as I conceive, to partial and prejudiced representations, backed up by "weight of character," this influence has gradually extended itself, so as to include many honest individuals, who have not taken pains to investigate the subject for themselves ; until, the current has become so powerful, as to overcome another large class of Society, who agree with us in sentiment, and secretly approve of our measures, and have formerly expressed their opinions ; but who, from various reasons, such as, a want of moral courage, a morbid desire to preserve the peace and unity of the Society, and perhaps, in some cases, a wish to maintain their good reputation, have yielded their deliberate convictions, and have actually suffered their influence to go against us.

Our Yearly Meeting, this year, has issued an Epistle of advice to its Members, in which they allude to the importance of our Testimony to the influence of the Holy Spirit—which they fear will be lowered, by joining with others, in Associations for the abolition of Slavery, for the promotion of Temperance, and of Peace, which they say are *religious* testimonies, and *therefore*, they persuade their Members not to join such Associations. I have not a doubt that, this will be followed up by a rule, making it a disciplinary offence, and even some go so far now, as to give this advice a construction, by which Members may be disowned for refusing compliance. How humiliating, when viewed in contrast with the noble stand taken by Friends in your land ! And does the spirit of truth lead in such opposite directions ? Several other Yearly Meetings have taken similar ground. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting issued similar advice two years ago, which however, has not been enforced, and is disregarded by large numbers. Indiana Yearly Meeting, last year, put forth a document of like character, and gives, as a reason for such advice, the following, viz. " Our standard of morality and religion is a high and holy standard ; in associating with others not of our Society for promoting benevolent objects, this standard has often been lowered. Something objectionable may have been adopted,—some peculiarity we deem it important to maintain, may have been abandoned."

The objections made to our engaging in this cause are various. One very prominent one is, that it is inconsistent with the views of Friends on the immediate influence of the Spirit. Lecturing on slavery, or other moral subjects, is placed on the same ground as preaching the gospel. I have heard some of our leading members say, that for a Friend to *premeditate* a lecture on slavery, or any other moral subject, was a violation of our testimony in relation to the ministry ; that, consistently with our principles, none but those who are called to the work of the ministry, could deliver public discourses on such subjects ; that, as it is considered improper for a minister to make a previous engagement to preach ; therefore, an appointment for an address on slavery, or any similar subject, would be inconsistent ; and, that the mere circumstance of a Friend's proposing to deliver such an address, was conclusive evidence that he was unsound in principle ! I have heard this ground taken by some of the most prominent members of New England Yearly Meeting. It follows, then, that to pay an Anti-Slavery agent, is equally inconsistent, as to contribute to a hireling ministry ; and that it is as much a violation of the order of our Society to attend Anti-Slavery and Temperance Meetings, as to attend the meetings for worship, of other denominations ! These views seem to prevail among us to a considerable extent, and to have given rise to the advice which has just been issued from our Yearly Meeting. It seems to me to be a palpable perversion of a doctrine, which I hope to see maintained in all its original simplicity and purity. Again, it is said that, as the immediate influence of the Spirit is not so fully acknowledged by other people generally as by Friends, there is danger, in associating with such persons, of neglecting this important qualification, and of proceeding "in our own wills," and "in our own strength." An objection, conclusive with some, is, that while the Society does not see its way clear to act, it is unsafe for individual members to move in advance of the body. Another objection is, that, in some instances, Anti-Slavery meetings have been opened with prayer. On this subject, the facts are these :—In the local Societies in which Friends are associated, I do not know of an instance where such a practice prevails ; and I have been surprised at the great influence which we have in these Societies in proportion to our numbers. In the larger Meetings, I have never known of an instance where there has been any action of the Society on the subject. When any

person has been invited, it has been by the presiding officer on his own responsibility, and Friends have not felt themselves accountable for a proceeding in which they have not, in any degree, participated. In many of the Meetings, and this was the case at the last Meeting of the National Society, the presiding officer has not given any personal invitation, but has intimated that, if any person felt called upon to pray, there was liberty to do so. Again, we have been told that such associating, would have a tendency to lead us to compromise the Testimonies of the Society, in relation to its *outward peculiarities*—moreover, that still greater departures from our faith would be the consequence, as it is said, has been the case in England. The late division in the Society there, has been attributed to the connexion of Friends, with others, in the benevolent Associations of the day. Then, besides these, are the common objections of, *excitement, hard language, &c. &c.*

One or two more particulars respecting the action of the Society on the subject of Slavery. At our Monthly Meeting in the 8th Month, 1837, I introduced a proposition that we recommend to the Quarterly Meeting, to memorialize Congress against the annexation of Texas to this government; a measure which was then evidently in contemplation, and which, the friends of freedom had reason to fear would be speedily consummated. The proposition received the approbation of the Monthly Meeting; and when it reached the Quarterly Meeting, it was united with, there, by the great body of Friends, and a Memorial was accordingly adopted; though objections were made by several Members of a Yearly Meeting committee present, (Members of the Meeting for Sufferings) on the ground that, perhaps the Meeting for Sufferings might be inclined to take the subject up, and this movement might have a tendency to obstruct the way for action by that body. At a subsequent Monthly Meeting, a proposition was made by an Abolition Friend that, the Meeting should suggest for the consideration of the Meeting for Sufferings, the expediency of aiding in circulating information in relation to the successful result of the great experiment of West India Emancipation; an object in which it was thought, all could unite. The Monthly Meeting adopted the proposition; but the measure was stifled at the threshold of the Meeting for Sufferings. Such results of our efforts have very much discouraged us from further attempts to produce any effective action by the Society.

